

Hearing Loss Increases a Child's Risk of Balance Problems

Audiologists can help.



Did you know that hearing and balance are linked?

The ear is made up of 3 parts: the external, middle, and inner ear. The hearing sensors and the balance sensors (called vestibular organs) are in the inner ear. The vestibular organs, along with our eyes and sense of touch, help maintain balance. Issues that cause hearing loss can also cause vestibular loss and put children at risk for balance problems and falls.

- Up to 70% of children with permanent hearing loss also have problems with their balance sensors. Up to 40% of them have severe damage to these sensors in both ears.
- Signs of a problem may include: delayed motor development, frequent falls, difficulty with balance-related activities (e.g. riding a bike), difficulty navigating in darkness and on uneven surfaces, and learning difficulties.

What can you do?

- Make an appointment with an audiologist if you suspect hearing loss or balance issues
- Make your home safer with handrails on stairs, keep high traffic areas free of tripping hazards, use anti-slip flooring and ensure good lighting
- Provide your child with play opportunities that stimulate balance and ensure your child wears appropriate protective gear when playing sports

What can audiologists do?

Audiologists are health professionals who provide individualized care to people of all ages with hearing and balance issues. They can:

- Assess hearing and balance to identify if your child is at risk for balance issues and falls;
- Recommend and fit hearing technology as needed to optimize your child's hearing and communication;
- Provide specific therapy and exercise programs to improve balance and prevent falls; and
- Make referrals for further medical review (e.g., primary care provider, Ear-Nose-Throat specialist [ENT], vision specialist).



Find an audiologist near you at: speechandhearing.ca